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REASONS againſt the BILL for the better Improvement of the TRADE to AFRICA, *by Eſtabliſhing a Regulated-Company.*

bill read 21 March 1709

Humbly offered to the Conſideration of the Honourable Houſe of Commons.

I. UNDER the colour of a National, or rather Notional Freedom to all Her Majeſty's Subjects, this Bill would give an unreſtrain'd Liberty, to ſome few particular ſelf-deſigning Perſons to overturn and deſtroy the Rights, and violently Seize the Poſſeſſions and Property of the Royal-*African*-Company; without giving any Juſt, legal or equitable Equivalent for the ſame, or propoſing any ſhadow of real Security for whatever the Value may amount to: But the whole left in a very confuſed and undetermined manner, at the Arbitrary Diſcretion of ſuch private Perſons, as, by this Bill, would in effect be both Judges and Parties: Whereas if (according to the common Rule in all ſuch Caſes, when any Perſon or Perſons are to be deveſted of their Right and Property, upon any ſuppoſed National Account) it were provided, by this Bill, that the Property and Poſſeſſion of the Forts and Settlements, were to remain in the preſent Company, together with the ſole Right of Trading to all Ports and Places within their Protection and Influence, until the Juſt and Equitable Value thereof ſhould be paid by the Separate-Traders, who are carrying on this Bill; 'tis more than probable that, in ſuch Caſe, the Property and Poſſeſſion of the Premiſſes would not be altered in haſte.

II. This Bill provides no manner of Security for the Yearly Exportation of certain Quantities of Manufactures; nor for ſupplying the Plantations with ſufficient Numbers of *Negroes*, at moderate Rates; nor for the Preſervation of the Trade by any certain Fund, for Maintaining, Repairing or Building Forts and Settlements, where the ſame are or may be neceſſary (all which are provided for in the Schemes given in by the Royal *African*-Company) and in ſhort all the Propoſals in this Bill relating to the Maintainance and Preſervation, of the Forts and Settlements, and Trade, and for the Payment of thoſe Forts and Settlements now belonging to the Royal *African*-Company, are ſo very looſe indetermin'd and unaccountably Precarious, that certainly they can never obtain the Suffrage and Sanction of the Parliament: For, tho' Liberty and Property are very deſirable Things, when they go Hand in Hand; Yet 'tis hop'd that the one will never be indulged to deſtroy the other.

III. 'Tis Demonſtrable that this Bill (tho' it were paſt into an Act) would never anſwer the Ends and Purpoſes thereby propoſed in Relation to the Trade to *Africa*, any more than the Act paſt the laſt Seſſion of Parliament, for the Encouragement of the Trade to *America*, has anſwered any of the Ends or Purpoſes thereby intended; which is known to have had no more Effect, than if the ſaid Act had never been made: And as the bare Opinions of any particular ſett of Men can never alter the nature and inſeparable qualities of Things; ſo the nature and ſingular Circumſtaces of the Trade to *Africa*, can never admit of it's being carried on and preſerved by the looſe and precarious Method propoſed by this Bill.

IV. By this Bill none can Trade to *Africa*, but ſuch as will previouſly ſubject themſelves to the Payment of Arbitrary and uncertain Contributions, for Maintaining and Building Forts, *&c.* and to ſeveral other uncertain Conditions, without the leaſt Aſſurance that any Perſon or Perſons, will concurr and comply with the ſame.

V. By

V. By this Bill it is expreſly declared that the Parliament ſhould grant ſuch another abſolute Donation to the imaginary Regulated-Company therein mention'd, *of all the Dominions, Regions, Countries, Territories, Continents, Coaſts, Ports, Bayes and Rivers, between* Cape Blanco, *and* Cape de Bona Eſperanza *Incluſive* (which comprehends about Two Thouſand Leagues along the Coaſt of *Africa*) *with all the Iſlands near adjoyning to thoſe Coaſts*, &c. as Pope *Alexander* the *6th.* granted to the *Spaniards* of the whole Dominions, *&c.* of *America*, and to the *Portugueze* of all the *Eaſt-Indies*; without any manner of Exception, or Reſervation, as to the Natives Right of Property or Conſent; or to the Rights, Acquiſitions, Poſſeſſions, Properties or Settlements of the *Dutch*, *French*, *Portugueze*, *Danes*, *Brandenburgers*, or any other *European* Nation, upon either the *South* or *North* Coaſts of *Africa*.

VI. This Bill takes away the Security of the Creditors of the Royal *African* Company; and incapacitates the ſaid Company, from taking juſt and neceſſary Meaſures for bringing home their Effects, and making the utmoſt of their Property for diſcharge of their Debts.

VII. This Bill (if paſt into an Act) would render the Trade to *Africa*, in very great danger of being wholly loſt to this Kingdom, by means of ſuch a precarious Conſtitution, as is contrary to the Experience of all Ages, and the univerſal Example and Practice of all other Nations.

REASONS

Againſt the BILL,

For the better improvement of the Trade to *Africa*, by Eſtabliſhing a Regulated-Company.

58